



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Jan H. Gardner  
County Executive

Steven C. Horn, Division Director  
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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Historic Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Amanda Whitmore, Historic Preservation Planner  
**DATE:** May 21, 2021  
**RE:** Brunswick Railroad Square Project

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#### **Request:**

Does the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) have comments on the proposed Residences at Railroad Square project to be located in the Brunswick National Register Historic District?

#### **Background and Discussion:**

Staff was notified by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) of a federally-funded project planned in the Brunswick historic district, the Residences at Railroad Square. The proposed project involves the demolition of three historic properties, the rehabilitation of one historic property, and the construction of a 45-unit mixed income residential development ([Attachment 1](#)). This project will result in an adverse effect to the Brunswick historic district. Additionally, Brunswick recently approved a conservation district for a portion of their downtown which this project would be located within.

DHCD is hosting a meeting for consulting parties to discuss mitigation, avoidance, and/or minimization efforts on June 7. Staff will attend the meeting and will provide comments on the project. Staff will offer the following comments during the consultation meeting:

- Suggest modifying the placement of the new development so that it sits at the corner of South Maple and the parking area. This would provide infill along South Maple Street and maintain the setback along the street. Additionally, this siting could potentially avoid the demolition of 12 South Maple Street.
- A redesign of the structure so that it compliments and incorporates existing architectural features found in the district will minimize some of the effects of the project to the district.
- If demolition of historic properties cannot be avoided, mitigation could include updating the historic research and documentation on each property to be demolished, identifying other properties within the town boundaries that need historic documentation, and/or

contributing towards another project in the historic district that will have a positive impact on a historic resource.

Staff is requesting any additional comments from the HPC that can be provided at the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Staff will update the HPC on the results of the consulting parties meeting at the July 7 HPC meeting. All public comments are due to DHCD by July 12.

**Attachment:**

Attachment 1: Residences at Railroad Square Project Summary and Rendering

# The Residences at Railroad Square

The Residences at Railroad Square, a 45-unit mixed income project, is developed by a partnership of Taft-Mills Group, LLC and Interfaith Housing Alliance. Located in the center of downtown Brunswick Maryland, Railroad Square is ideally located adjacent to the Brunswick MARC train station. This location provides immediate access to a train line that takes passengers to Martinsburg, WV to the west and Washington DC to the east.

Downtown Brunswick features several restaurant options including Smoketown Brewing station, Potomac Street Grill, and Beans in the Belfry. All of these establishments are within 0.2 miles from the Residences at Railroad Square site. In addition to these restaurants, other downtown attractions including Square Corner Park, the Brunswick Heritage Museum, Brunswick City Hall, and an entrance to the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal towpath are all within a short walking distance. While these establishments and amenities provide a foundation of businesses in downtown Brunswick, there is a lack of dense housing to bring the critical mass necessary to drive further growth.

The development will include 3 1-bedroom, 28 2-bedroom, and 14 3-bedroom units. Rents will range from approximately \$600/month to \$1,250/month and will serve households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$65,000/year. The project will include a new construction, modern apartment building that will house 43 of the project's 45 units. This building will include parking under the building and amenities including a large community room/patio area, fitness center, and work pods. It offers a unique housing option in Brunswick as all units will be single-story living and be serviced with an elevator, providing housing opportunities for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The project will also include substantial renovation of the building at 3 S. Maple Street known as the Mommer's Building. This will include creating a completely renovated retail space on the first floor and two of the project's 45 apartments on the upper floors. This building has been vacant since the Mommer's Diner closed in 2013. It is in poor physical condition and is not structurally sound. The renovation of this building will bring it to new condition. Historic elements inside the building will be preserved for re-use within the project or off-site.

Most of the project is infill development of a vacant lot behind the Potomac Street retail buildings. However, in order to build the scale required for feasibility, the project will include demolition of four structures, three of which are historic. These include houses at 5 S. Maple Ave and 9 S. Maple Ave. as well as the Karns Building at 12 S. Maryland Ave. While all of these buildings have contributed to the history of Brunswick, they have been vacant since at least the time the current owner purchased them (2007) and are in a state of disrepair. The development team has incorporated architectural features from the Karns building, including roof elements and a barn door, into the new apartment building. We will also look to repurpose other elements including potentially utilizing existing barn doors inside the Karns building and stone from the foundation of the Karns building into the project.





**5 and 9 S Maple Avenue**





**12 S Maryland Ave.- Karns Building**



**12 S Maryland Ave.- Auxiliary Structure**







View from S. Maple Ave/Northeast



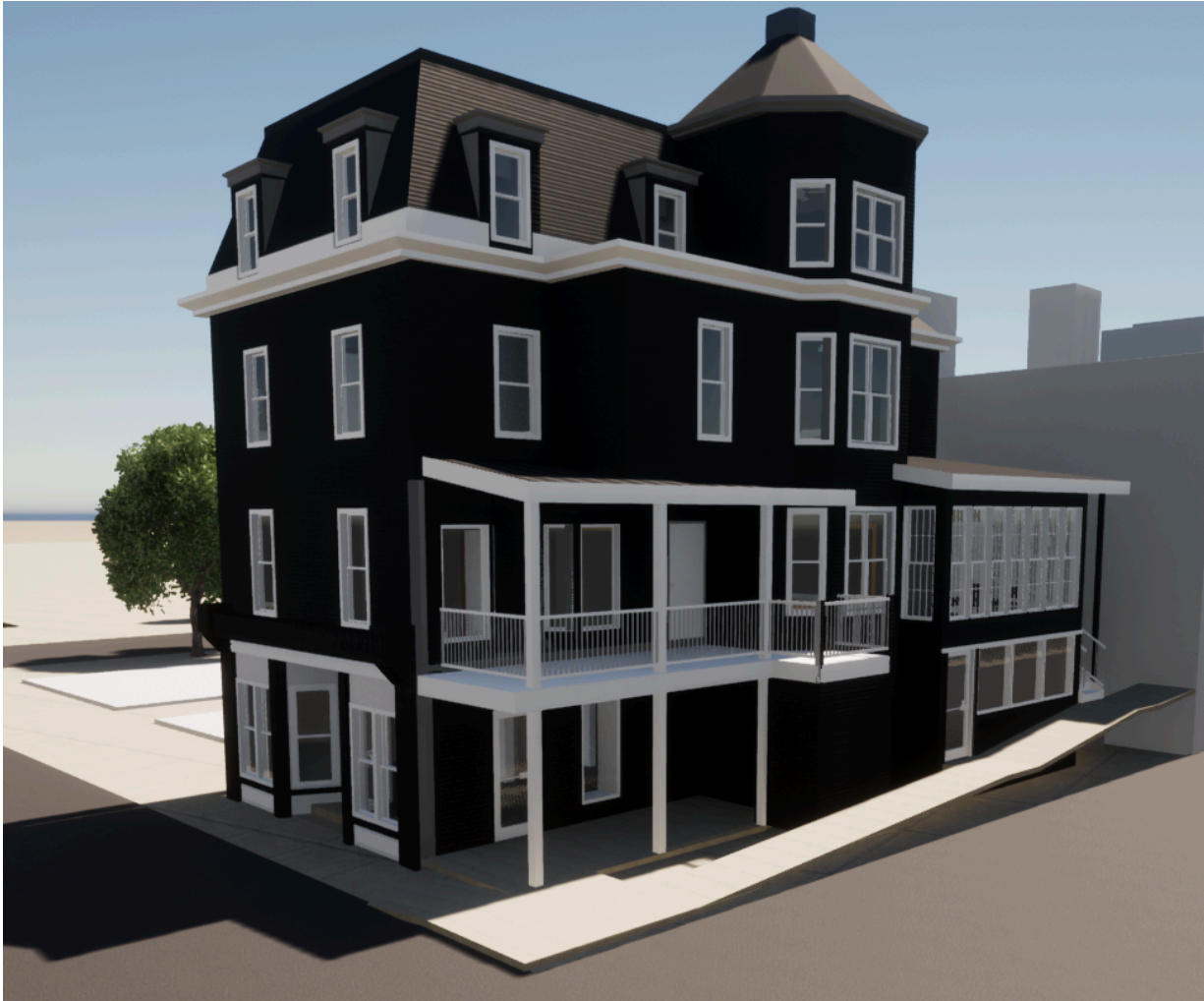
View from S. Maple Ave./Southeast



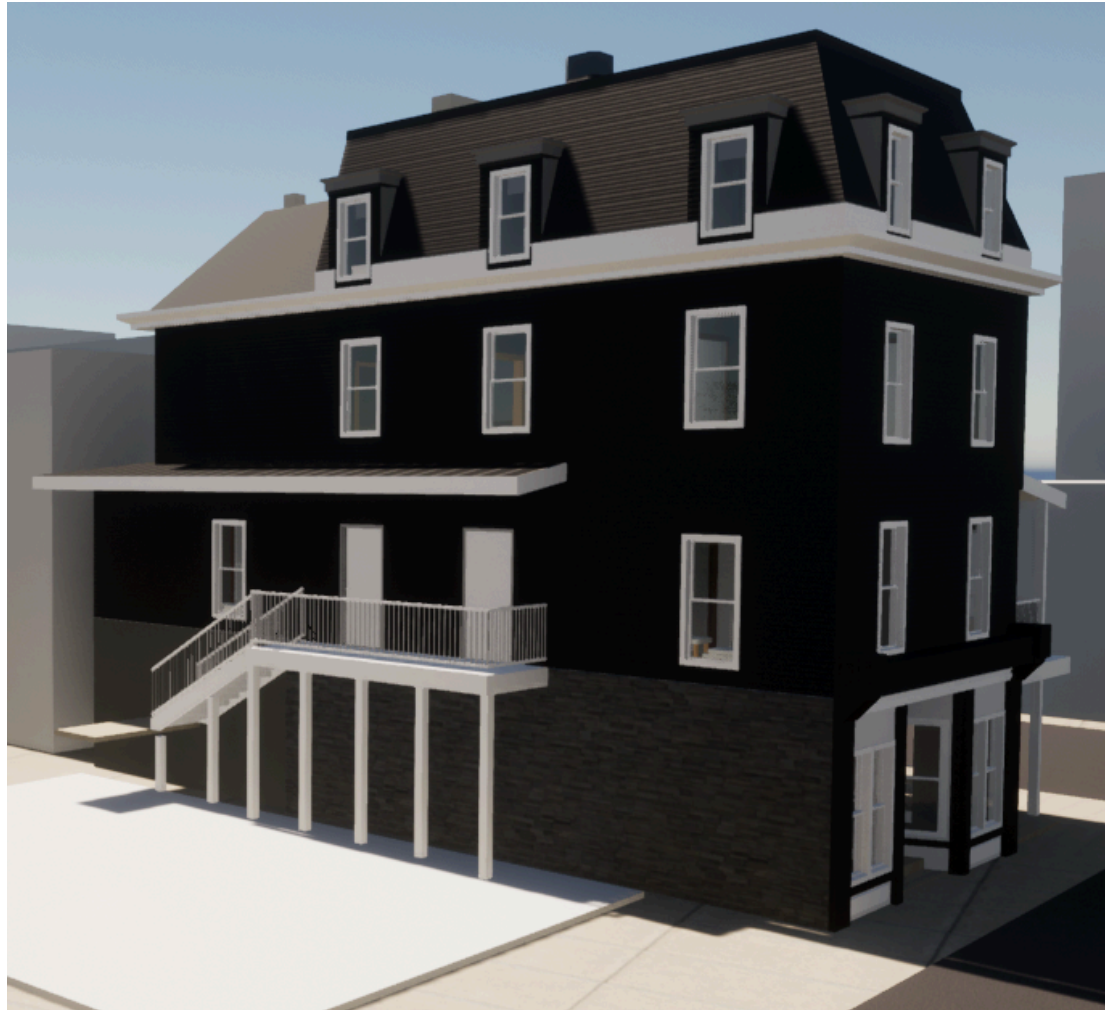


View from Maryland Ave/Southwest





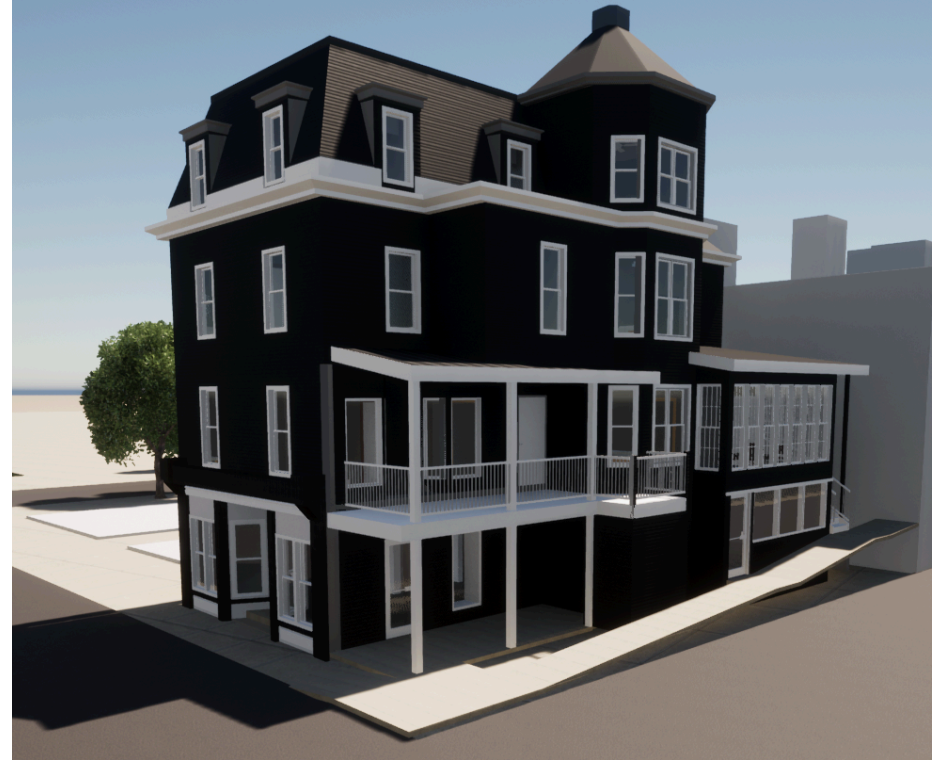
Mommer's Building from Northeast



Mommer's Building from Southeast



Mommer's Building Current



Mommer's Building Proposed

Primary exterior change on Mommer's front is to improve area under front porch





Current view from Southeast



Rendering from Southeast

## Demolition



### Plan to demolish:

1. 12 S. Maryland Ave – west side of site, known as the Karns Building
2. 25 W. Potomac St. – block building in middle of site
3. 5 S. Maple Ave – white house near corner of W. Potomac and S. Maple (immediately south of the "Mommer's Building on the corner")
4. 9 S. Maple Ave – blue house with "X" on furthest to bottom left.